

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (original) A gas discharge tube comprising:
  - a block, wherein at least a portion of the block is maintained at a reference potential;
  - a cathode engaging the block and biased at a higher potential than the reference potential; and,
  - an anode engaging the block and biased at a higher potential than the cathode.
2. (original) The gas discharge tube of claim 1 wherein the reference potential is substantially ground.
3. (original) The gas discharge tube of claim 1 further comprising a biasing electrode, wherein the block comprises a plasma supporting passage between the cathode and the anode, wherein the biasing electrode overlies the passage and extends substantially between the cathode and the anode, and wherein the biasing electrode has a bias to attract positive alkali ions.

4. (original) The gas discharge tube of claim 3 wherein the reference potential is substantially ground.

5. (original) The gas discharge tube of claim 3 wherein the biasing electrode is biased above the reference potential.

6. (original) The gas discharge tube of claim 5 wherein the reference potential is substantially ground.

7. (original) The gas discharge tube of claim 3 wherein the anode is a first anode, wherein the gas discharge tube further includes a second anode, wherein the second anode engages the block and is biased at a higher potential than the cathode, wherein the plasma supporting passage extends between the cathode and the first and second anodes, and wherein the biasing electrode overlies the passage and extends substantially between the cathode and the first and second anodes.

8. (currently amended) A gas discharge tube comprising:

a block, wherein at least a portion of the block is maintained at a reference potential;

a cathode engaging the block and biased at a lower potential than the reference potential; and,

an anode engaging the block and biased at a higher potential than the reference potential, wherein the reference potential is substantially ground; and,

a biasing electrode, wherein the block comprises a plasma supporting passage between the cathode and the anode, wherein the biasing electrode overlies the passage and extends substantially between the cathode and the anode, and wherein the biasing electrode has a bias to attract positive alkali ions.

9-11. (canceled)

12. (currently amended) The gas discharge tube of claim 10 8 wherein the biasing electrode is biased negatively with respect to the reference potential.

13. (canceled)

14. (original) The gas discharge tube of claim 10 wherein the anode is a first anode, wherein the gas discharge tube further includes a second anode, wherein the second anode engages the block and is biased at a higher potential than the cathode, wherein the plasma supporting passage extends between the cathode and the first and second anodes, and wherein the biasing electrode overlies the passage and extends substantially between the cathode and the first and second anodes.

15. (original) A gas discharge tube comprising:  
a cathode;  
an anode;  
a block engaged by the cathode and anode, wherein the block comprises a plasma supporting passage between the cathode and the anode;  
a biasing electrode overlying the passage and extending substantially between the cathode and the anode, wherein the biasing electrode has a bias to attract positive alkali ions.

16. (original) The gas discharge tube of claim 15 wherein at least a portion of the block is maintained at a reference potential, wherein the cathode is biased at a higher potential than the block, and wherein the anode is biased at a higher potential than the cathode.

17. (original) The gas discharge tube of claim 16 wherein the reference potential is substantially ground.

18. (original) The gas discharge tube of claim 16 wherein the biasing electrode is biased positively with respect to the reference potential.

19. (original) The gas discharge tube of claim 18 wherein the reference potential is substantially ground.

20. (original) The gas discharge tube of claim 15 wherein at least a portion of the block is maintained at a reference potential, wherein the cathode is biased at a lower potential than the block, and wherein the anode is biased at a higher potential than the block.

21. (original) The gas discharge tube of claim 20 wherein the reference potential is substantially ground.

22. (original) The gas discharge tube of claim 20 wherein the biasing electrode is biased negatively with respect to the reference potential.

23. (original) The gas discharge tube of claim 22 wherein the reference potential is substantially ground.

24. (previously presented) The gas discharge tube of claim 15 wherein at least a portion of the block is maintained at a reference potential, wherein the cathode is biased at a higher potential than the

reference potential, and wherein the anode is biased at a higher potential than the cathode.

25. (previously presented) The gas discharge tube of claim 24 wherein the biasing electrode is biased positively with respect to the reference potential.

26. (previously presented) The gas discharge tube of claim 25 wherein the reference potential is substantially ground.